

A Gentlemanly Robber

By C. B. LEWIS

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Miss Lucy Davis, twenty years old and the daughter of a widow, was assistant bookkeeper and assistant cashier at the Filat woolen mills in the suburbs of a certain western city. It was one of the duties of the cashier to go to the bank in the city every Saturday forenoon and draw an amount sufficient to pay the wages of the employees, and he had never met with any adventure in so doing. One was coming, however.

There came a day when a stranger recognized him and tried to possess himself of the \$2,500. He went over the ground from the bank to the mills and his plans, and a week before the last he felt certain that the boudle was his.

"Look here, Miss Davis," said the manager one Saturday forenoon, "I have word that Mr. Samson is sick and won't be down this morning. At 10 o'clock you will have to go to the bank and come back in a hansom." The young lady was rather pleased to go on the errand, and when the hour arrived she set out with never a thought that it was to be an eventful day in her life. As she boarded a car in front of the mill a good looking stranger sat opposite her. Although she did not say that he ever glanced at her she had severely peeped at him and was quite favorably impressed with his appearance.

She checked was promptly cashed at the bank and with the money in her pocket the girl reached the door to an empty carriage drawn up as if waiting for her.

"Keb, ma'am?" queried the driver, the next moment she was inside and he whirled away.

Miss Davis was so occupied with thoughts of something else that she did not notice the landmarks along the way. When the hack suddenly stopped she looked out and saw that she had arrived at the mill. Instead of the house she had arrived at a lone old house standing alone on the block, and the neighborhood was one she had never seen before.

He sprang to the ground and began questioning the driver, but he wheeled and drove off without a reply, and out the house stepped the man of the set car and raised his hat and bowed and smiled.

"Where am I? What does this mean?" asked the girl.

"If you will step inside I will explain," replied the man.

"But I shall not step inside. Why did a carriage bring me here? I shall not step inside a minute."

But she did. The man stepped forward and passed an arm around her. He carried her within in spite of her struggles. He seated her on a box in a room and smilingly said:

"Excuse me, please, but you were a bit foolish. You have asked several questions, and I will now proceed to answer them."

"You are in the suburbs. You were caught here to be robbed. You will be detained a few hours and then get at liberty. Had the cashier gone to the bank for the money he would now have been in your place. You will be helped in this matter, and you must understand that you are also perfectly helpless to take the money from you. Better take a sensible view of things. How much money did you draw?"

"About \$2,500," she replied as she looked over the reticule.

"Not a fortune, but fair pay for a week's work. Now, then, you have got to endure my society for an hour or so, and I hope you will try to make the best of it."

The door had been locked. He raised the window, drew up another box and continued:

"We may as well be sociable as to sit here and sulk. Has the thought ever occurred to you that you would be a victim some day?"

"I never expected to fall into the hands of a robber."

"It was foreordained that you were to become a heroine that way. Your very papers will send reporters to interview you. They will publish your story. They will describe the color of your hair and eyes, praise your small hands and feet, tell how cool and calm you were in facing the robber. You will be called one of the most beautiful girls in the state."

"You are impudent," said the girl, with a toss of her head.

"Then forgive me. If you are not angry you will have a score of opportunities to become so. You will receive letters from all over the state. A heroine you will be pointed out on every street, and the reporters will follow you home and write articles on how you eat and sleep, your old shoes, your dislikes, whether pickles suit you or give you headache. It may be composed and sung in honor, and it is certain that a good deal of cigars will be named after you. Fame is surely about to knock at your door."

"I want none of it," responded the girl. "I want to appeal to your better nature to give me that money and let me go. You say you are a robber, but I am sure you are also a gentleman and not without honor and sense."

"I am a gentleman by birth and education, and I have my fair share of wealth, but this is a worldly matter and must be discussed from a worldly point. You have read in the papers haven't you, that the mayor of

your city is accused of booting and that an effort will be made to impeach him?"

"Yes."

"There are two aldermen under indictment and two more suspected, while a building inspector has had to leave the country to escape arrest. You knew that, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, some of them at least are gentlemen and all have more or less sentiment, but has anybody appealed to them on that score to surrender their boudle?"

"I-I-I guess not. But because another man commits crime you cannot be excused," replied the girl.

"That is ancient history," smiled the man. "There has been a new deal on for the last fifty years. In our haste to get rich we have put principle behind us. The motto of the average man today is, 'Get rich as fast as you can and any way you can, but don't get caught at it.' We haven't any use for the strictly honest man for many years past. He was sent to the poorhouse and died there before you were born. I freely admit that because some bank president steals the funds it doesn't follow that I am licensed to rob, but it does follow that if I am to get ahead in the world I must meet men on their own ground. For instance, the Flint woolen mills are supposed to turn out woolen clothes. As a matter of fact, they are mixing cotton with their goods and deceiving the public for gain. The public must get even or get left. I am one of the public."

"All this is rank sophistry," said Miss Davis when he had finished.

"Granted, my dear, but you cannot get over the fact that I have the money."

"And you will not return it?"

"I would not deprive you of the fame that awaits you. The chances are even up that this will bring you a rich husband. I am now going to take my departure. The door will be locked behind me, and you can't raise any of the sashes high enough to enable you to creep out. An hour hence the door will be unlocked, and you will be at liberty to go. I hope you will not blame me individually. I am as honest as other men—no more, no less. Goodbye to you."

And in telling her story a hundred times over within the next ten days the girl always took pains to add:

"He was a robber, but he was a gentleman. I was really ashamed to ask him to give me back the money."

Libations and Perfumes.
In the libations of the Greeks, Egyptians and others perfume was largely used. Herodotus mentions the incident of the twelve kings of Egypt who were offering sacrifice in the temple of Vulcan. At the door of the temple on the great altar were laid bundles of sandalwood and cinnamon. Upon these the sacrificial boar was stretched, the fire lighted, pastils of incense thrown in and the smoke and "alicious smells" rose high to heaven. Then into the inner courts marched the royal procession, preceded by incense burners, who bore golden salvers, and by the smaller altar the kings knelt in prayer. The priest, rising, sprinkled consecrated perfume over them and brought forth the golden beakers for libation. But the old man, a little muddle headed, counted eleven cups as twelve. Psammethichus, who was left without, took off his brass helmet and in that offered the perfumed wine to Vulcan, the fire god. Previous to this the oracle had declared that he who offered a libation in a cup of brass should be sole king of Egypt. Unconsciously Psammethichus had fulfilled the condition, and he was therewith proclaimed king.

How a Fire May Start.
The ease with which a fire may be started and the apparently inexplicable causes which may produce one are both emphasized by a happening in an uptown house last week. The mistress of the house was seated in the extension parlor in the afternoon alone and perfectly quiet, when without warning a hanging bookshelf broke from its fastenings and slipped to the floor. On its way it struck a small table standing beneath it and knocked over a box of matches, igniting two or three of them. These few of, one touching the light gauze scarf which had hung from the table, which fell blazing against the lace curtain near by. The frightened screams of the mistress brought a servant, and it took energetic measures on the part of the two women to extinguish the rapidly spreading fire. Had the room been untenanted, as it had been all the morning and would have been again fifteen minutes later, it would have been a case of fire department succor to have saved the house.

Word Oddities.
No man who is seeking political honors in these days is a "candidate," according to the true etymological significance of the word. Those who stood for office in ancient Rome were known as "candidates" because it was customary for them to wear a white toga ("candidus," white) as soon as their canvass had begun. The Latin for "canvassing," too, was either "ambitus" or "ambitio," according to its association with or freedom from bribery and corrupt practices. Both meant "going round." "Ambitio" was the good kind as opposed to "ambitus," which always implied dishonesty and unfairness.

"Shopping" was certainly a slang word until past the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Bee's Dictionary of Sports and Slang, published in 1825, defines the word as follows: "Shopping—Among women going about from shop to shop, buying little articles perhaps, perhaps not, but always pulling about great quantities of goods."

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